



From top to bottom, left to right: 1) Stonebraker stands at the crosswalk between the Olympic stadium and the tower that holds the Olympic flame before entering the stadium to watch track and field competition. 2) Visitors await entry into the archery competition at Stone mountain, 30 miles east of Atlanta. 3) The competition field features billboard size scoreboards and television screens. Judges, like Stonebraker, were placed into blinds to better judge the competition. 4) Stonebraker takes a break in the judges 'pits' during competition. 5) Team competition was fierce as the Americans edged the Koreans by only two points. From left Rod White takes his turn as Butch Johnson looks on. 6) American Justin Huish takes the gold in men's individual competition with Magnus Pettersson of Sweden taking the silver and Kyo-Moon Oh of Korea with the bronze.

Olympic Ambassador

JSC employee fulfills dream of taking part in Olympic history

[Editor's note: Rick Stonebraker, a quality engineer for Raytheon at JSC and four-time national archery champion, served as an archery judge at the Olympic games in Georgia. The following article details his experiences during the week in Atlanta.]

By Rick Stonebraker

The Olympics are a dream I've had since I was a kid, so being chosen to be an official judge was a great honor.

The flight to the games was nothing special, but being met by a volunteer at the gate with my name on a placard certainly was a highlight.

At the accreditation center I was issued an Olympic wardrobe: two pair of khaki pants, three pair of khaki socks, one multi-ring polo shirt, two red polo shirts for judging, a long-sleeve white dress shirt, a pair of Reebok walking shoes, a Panama hat, a blue web belt with an Olympic engraved buckle and a beautiful teal blazer that hangs on me like Hakeem's outfits. Nice stuff!

Housing at Emory University was typical dormitory rooms, big enough for one but meant for two. Each room had a television as required by the Olympic Committee to view events.

The archery and cycling venue was located on the north side of Stone Mountain

about 30 miles east of Atlanta. The site had previously been a dump, but had been converted into a magnificent area for the Olympic games. The original \$3.5 million price tag had ballooned to more than \$12 million. Plans are to fully restore the site to its original state when the games are over. Does that mean another dump?

The venue itself looked like a tent city, all air conditioned. The athletes had a tent, the judges had a tent and there were dozens of trailers. It looked like either a

refugee city or a circus coming to town. Five thousand spectators were seated in stands shaped like a giant horse-shoe. It was exciting to see that many people watching archery.

The tower on the right side of the field held a 30-foot television screen. Cameras showed archers shooting and target results. The big screen was able to show all angles, making it very exciting to watch. There were even mini-cameras in the center of targets that were used in the medal rounds.

The expertise of the announcer made all of the above worthwhile. There were times while I was scoring that I was not able to take my eyes off my target, but I could always hear the announcer. That was the only way I could keep track of each exciting match.

The archery field was magnificent. I was a scoring judge in the blinds, or 'pits,' which were near the targets. There were eight targets in four pairs. After an archer shoots an arrow, the scoring judge verifies the value of the arrow and writes it on a score sheet. Approaching the target after every three arrows, the target judge calls out the value of each arrow and the score card is verified. The scores are sent to a central computer and displayed on the giant scoreboard, 40 feet tall and 50 feet wide.

Before each session, the judges marched into the stadium to the tune of the Olympic

theme and the theme from Ben Hur. Each time we did this was inspiring.

In the preliminary rounds Olympic records were set in women's and men's individual competition. The Korean women and men set Olympic and world records in the team events.

Justin Huish of the U.S.A. won the gold medal for the men, and Kim Kyung-Wook of Korea won the women's gold medal. The number one ranked Korean men's team fell to the strong USA team, 251-249 in a very exciting final.

The judges' "official" photo session in front



of the big scoreboard was followed by closing words in the judges tent. On behalf of NASA, I presented all the International Judges with information kits supplied by Bunny Dean of the Education and Information Services Branch. These contained history, shuttle photos and flight decals. I also presented each judge with a shuttle pin supplied by Helen Harris of the Awards Office. As pins are a big thing at the Olympics, these judges were proud to

have a one-of-a-kind pin to display.

This Olympic event was proclaimed the best organized archery event on an international scale. I was honored to be part of it.

Princess Anne was on hand to greet and encourage all of the British athletes at the Olympics, and that included archery. I was close enough to meet the royals. Prince Phillip noticed my curiosity and urged the princess in my direction. I removed my hat and gently shook her hand. During the medal ceremonies, I also saw the King of Sweden who was on hand to congratulate countryman Magnus Pettersson for winning the silver medal.

Some of the track and field events I attended at Olympic Stadium allowed me to watch Donovan Bailey breaking the world record, Gail Devers win her victory, Dan O'Brien, and Michael Johnson. I also saw gymnastics, volleyball, table tennis, diving, boxing and the Dream Team defeating Croatia. I arrived at Fulton County Stadium in time to watch the U.S.A. baseball team hit four home runs in two innings. Since archery shared a venue with cycling, I would spend my lunch time at the Velodrome. I took photos from the official photographers' platform at the end of the steeply banked track. Pretty exciting stuff. The top American sprinter lost the gold by the thickness of a wheel.

When attending other events, we were allowed in the VIP area and dined while watching several other events on closed-circuit televisions. One evening, the judges were honored guests of the Turkish Sports Federation. Soaking up the atmosphere, I realized how fortunate I was to be with so many intelligent and interesting people. Every judge knew at least one other language and some knew more. I learned just enough Turkish to say "thank you very much" at the end of the evening.

The Atlanta Constitution put out a report card on the Olympics and gave an "F" for ambiance. You couldn't prove that to us as my friend left her wallet at a T-shirt vendor early Saturday morning. After dropping me off at the airport, she returned to that vendor almost four hours later and the man returned her wallet with a pleasant, southern smile.

What a fantastic way to end this adventure. The people, the atmosphere, the events; it's a shame it has to come to an end. So, if you ask me what I thought of the whole thing—two thumbs up, a gold star and a perfect "10."

"What do ya say mate — see you down under in four years!" □